

East Suffolk Council

Transport and Works Act 1992



Consultation Report



**Lowestoft Tidal Barrier Order
May 2023**

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1. Introduction

East Suffolk Council is applying for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 (the TWA) and associated planning permission for the purposes of authorising a tidal defence barrier across the channel in the outer harbour east of the Bascule Bridge, together with associated works.

a. Purpose of this report

East Suffolk Council has carried out extensive consultation and engagement providing key organisations with the opportunity to inform option selection and the development of the scheme. More targeted and meaningful engagement helps build longer-term trust with our partners, communities, businesses and organisations. The approach adopted to communications and engagement for the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project has been one of two-way symmetrical dialogue, ensuring that we have reached out to those directly and indirectly impacted upon by the proposed approach, understood their viewpoint and have used these to shape the project's progression.

This report documents the process of consultation and feedback that has been taken on board and shaped project development.

The report is a summary of consultations undertaken by East Suffolk Council in the development and design of the proposals and has been prepared to comply with rule 10(2)(d) of the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006.

b. Scheme objectives

The main objective of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project is to reduce the risk of tidal and pluvial fluvial flooding to residential and commercial properties in Lowestoft in a sustainable way that promotes economic growth and development.

Works to manage the risk of pluvial and fluvial flooding have been completed and therefore this objective has been partially met. Works to reduce the risk of tidal flooding are ongoing and a crucial element of this is the construction of a 40m tidal barrier.

The project will deliver National Government outcomes for at least six Government Departments and contribute significantly to the growth of the economy.

The scheme aims to underpin the wider development of Lowestoft port as a central hub for marine and offshore industry notably supporting an accelerated delivery programme for ABP's LEEF project and as a marine transport hub for the Sizewell C nuclear power station (national infrastructure project).

c. Overview of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project

Lowestoft is a town of multiple deprivation that has become increasingly vulnerable to flooding from all sources for many decades. In December 2013 an East Coast storm surge event had significant consequences for Lowestoft. The surge was between a 1in100 (1%) and 1in150 (0.67%) AEP event) and approximately 158 residential and 233 commercial properties were flooded. The tidal flooding also resulted in the closure of key transportation links including Lowestoft railway station and the A47 through Lowestoft.

At present Lowestoft does not have any formal tidal defences protecting the town and without intervention, it has become increasingly vulnerable to tidal flooding due to climate

change. Lowestoft is currently considered to be at risk from the onset of flooding from tide levels with around a 1in5 (20%) to 1in10 (10%) Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP). A 1in200year (0.5% AEP) event (2018) would put approximately 221 residential and 373 commercial properties at risk of tidal flooding in addition to a number of locations earmarked for future development within the Lowestoft Local Plan.

This situation gets significantly worse when the impacts of climate change are considered with the low standard of protection restricting the growth potential of the local economy with a 1in200 year (0.5% AEP) Standard of Protection being the standard considered by developers and the Local Planning Authorities to enable the majority of new developments.

To effectively manage risk of flooding from all sources in Lowestoft, ESC has developed an integrated Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project. In 2021 the Council completed the fluvial and pluvial elements of this project. Tidal walls, the first phase of the tidal protection, will be complete in autumn 2023. However, the construction of a 40m tidal barrier is required to complete the integrated package of works. The lack of defences is suppressing the ability of Lowestoft to develop and grow and are not allowing the deprived areas of the town to “Level Up” as per wider Government outcomes. The lack of certainty of tidal flood risk is holding Lowestoft back and allowing social deprivation to remain a key issue for the town.

i. The tidal barrier

The town has become increasingly vulnerable to flooding from all sources for decades. Tidal flooding to 400 homes occurred in the East Coast surge of 1953 and this was replicated again in 2013 tidal surge when 158 residential and 233 commercial properties flooded in Lowestoft and Oulton Broad. Key transportation links such as the railway and A12 also flooded impacting on flood response, recovery and clean up. The town currently relies on a temporary barrier system which is deployed when flood forecasting triggers a surge warning. Defences were most recently deployed in 2017 when severe flood warnings were triggered and a 2.1m surge was predicted. Thankfully the surge diminished due to changing weather patterns. The town currently relies on the temporary barrier solution until a more permanent solution can be delivered.

Lowestoft is particularly susceptible to flooding from tidal surges due to the small normal tidal range compared to other locations along the east coast of England. Lowestoft has a tidal range of approximately 2m. This is low when compared to locations along the outer Thames and Humber estuaries which have tidal ranges in excess of 5m. A consequence of this low tidal range is that a significant tidal surge (<2m) at Lowestoft could cause flooding at almost any state of the tide whereas at locations with a greater tidal range where the timing of the surge event compared to high water has greater influence and reduces the likelihood and/or severity of flooding from the surge.

The impact of tidal flooding on the local economy is significant. A port like Lowestoft can only exist in a coastal location arguably in a flood risk zone. The port is one of only a few east coast ports that are in a position geographically to support offshore wind energy development and contribute to our national economy and wider government outcomes for greener energy supplies and carbon neutrality. The damage and disruption that is caused by flooding- like the 2013 surge -coupled with the lack of confidence for investors in the town that flood risk brings is stymying local growth. This in turn affects the local population due to reduced employment opportunities and diminishes the services available to them as taxable returns to ESC to offer such services are also limited.

The lack of certainty on flood risk is preventing development opportunities at key sites in and around the Lake Lothing area of the town making land uneconomic for private development which is needed to stimulate growth and provide much needed housing for local people. Homes for England have recently visited Lowestoft and are keen to work with the Council on delivering improved housing offers in Lowestoft to meet local need and deliver their housing requirements nationally. This housing will also fuel the economic regeneration of large parts at the centre of the town. Whilst some of this housing will be in the floodplain it is inevitable that development in seaside towns at risk of flooding is needed if coastal seaside towns are to remain viable. This is clearly set out in the Government 'Regeneration of Seaside Towns report'⁴ which acknowledges that without resilient coastal defences we cannot have resilient places.

The UK relies on a number of key coastal towns for nationally important economic outcomes as gateways to the marine and offshore industries and arguably we cannot meet the needs of the offshore and marine industries without coastal towns – arguably all are at risk of coastal flooding due to their proximity to the coast- we therefore require them to become more resilient and the LFRMP project aims to do that for Lowestoft. Without this scheme the only alternative is to manage flood risk through the existing temporary barriers until such time they are overwhelmed.

The only other option is to not proceed with a barrier project and the Council is not prepared to effectively 'decommission' Lowestoft as a town, nor is there any precedent to do so given the size and scale of the place and the opportunities it presents to local and national outcomes.

An initial long list of options was developed in 2017 and presented to the public as part of a consultation. At this time, the preferred option was for a combination of tidal flood walls and a 28m tidal barrier. As the table below highlights, following the results of a Navigation Impact Assessment, a wider barrier was introduced to improve barrier reliability by reducing the risk of ship impacts (and associated costs and environmental effects of repairs) when compared to the 28m barrier in Option 5. The increased width of the barrier improves the resilience of the barrier gates and reduces restrictions on the future development of the Lake Lothing entrance channel.

The defence alignment of this option is the same as Option 5 except with a wider barrier and a shorter length of demountable defences.

Short listed Option	Option Description
1 Do nothing	No maintenance or improvements would be undertaken on the existing flood defences.
2 Maintain - Do minimum	Maintenance of the existing flood wall along the east side of the A12 Waveney Road would continue to provide an informal flood defence, preventing tidal flood waters up to a level of 2.90m AOD from reaching the town centre from the Outer Harbour. No new flood defences would be provided. Provision of the flood warnings would continue.
3 Improve – flood walls only	Construction of approximately 5.5km of flood walls to the north and south of Lake Lothing and around the perimeter of the Outer Harbour. Where the defence line crosses the A47, lift-up/demountable flood barriers will be required from year 50. The Lake Lothing tidal walls tie into high ground towards the western end of Lake Lothing but do not continue all the way to Mutford lock. Continuing to the south in front of the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club, along the south pier access road tying into the existing Children's Corner sea wall. To the north of the Bascule Bridge, the tidal walls would be set back following the perimeter of the port estate, tying into high ground to the north of the

	<p>main ABP port entrance. To accommodate an existing intermediate pressure gas pipeline, a section of demountable defences is required adjacent to the north west corner of the trawl dock, set to the east of the existing port security fence.</p> <p>A further wall with sections of demountable barriers providing access would be</p>
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	<p>provided along Hamilton Road, tying into high ground in the west at the A47 and with the existing Hamilton sea wall to the east.</p> <p>A flood gate across the dual Norwich to Lowestoft railway line previously considered was ruled out due to technical and legal considerations.</p> <p>The tidal flood walls would be typically between 0.3m and 2.6m high including several sections of demountable defences, especially on the northern side of Lake Lothing to allow access to the port quaysides. A number of drainage outfalls would require adjustment to prevent the backflow of tidal water.</p>
5 Improve – 28m Bascule Bridge barrier and walls	<p>Construction of a 28m wide (navigable width) tidal barrier across the Lake Lothing entrance channel on the seaward side of the A47 Bascule Bridge.</p> <p>Approximately 1.0km of flood walls, flood gates and demountable barriers (0.3m to 1.9m high) would be constructed along the same alignment as Option 3 around the outer harbour with the flood walls tying into the tidal barrier structure, high ground and existing coastal defences to the north and south of the outer harbour.</p> <p>A number of tidal flap valves would also be required to seal existing drainage outfalls into the outer harbour. The existing tide gauge adjacent to the Bascule Bridge would need to be relocated to enable the construction of the tidal barrier.</p>
9 Improve – 40m Bascule Bridge barrier and walls	<p>This new option with a wider barrier was introduced to improve barrier reliability by reducing the risk of ship impacts (and associated costs and environmental effects of repairs) when compared to the 28m barrier in Option 5. The increased width of the barrier improves the resilience of the barrier gates and reduces restrictions on the future development of the Lake Lothing entrance channel.</p> <p>The defence alignment of this option is the same as Option 5 except with a wider barrier and a shorter length of demountable defences.</p>

d. Structure of this report

This report and its appendices sets out the consultation and engagement undertaken as part of the development of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Strategy and the development into the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project and is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 sets out the overall approach to consultation and engagement.

Chapter 3 sets out the consultation approaches, methodology and channels for the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Strategy and its progression to the Lowestoft Flood Risk

Management Project.

Chapter 4 sets out an overview of the overall consultation undertaken for the Environmental Impact Assessment.

Chapter 5. summarises the consultation undertaken with TWAO stakeholders. This includes those identified under Rule 13 and those named in Schedules 5 and 6 to the TWAO Rules

Chapter 6. sets out the future approaches to consultation and engagement.

2. Approach to consultation

East Suffolk Council and its partners in the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project strive to deliver effective stakeholder engagement and meaningful consultation with a wide range of interested parties and individuals as a fundamental component of major projects and schemes. They recognise the importance of maintaining effective channels of communication to enable a two-way flow of information and opinions and appreciate the

value that stakeholder feedback can add to projects. Consultation with those organisations listed in Schedules 5 and 6 is a requirement of the TWAO Rules. It is confirmed that all those named in column (2) of Schedules 5 and 6 of the TWAO Rules have been consulted where authority is sought for works or other matters described in column (1) of those tables. In addition, the 2006 Transport and Works Act (TWA) Guide to Procedures (Department for Transport, 2006) clearly identifies the benefits of pre-application consultation and recommends that promoters 'consult thoroughly on their proposals with relevant statutory authorities, with statutory utilities whose services may be affected, and with all other persons likely to be affected by the proposals'. Pre application consultation has therefore formed an important part of the development of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project, which has been consciously collaborative.

Proposals have been developed by close working between East Suffolk Council and its project partners, the Environment Agency, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Council and Suffolk County Council, taking views from a range of stakeholders. The project's Strategic Steering Group and Key Stakeholder Group have additionally played an important role in developing the Project.

Throughout the development of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project, information has been openly shared and discussion has been welcomed. In this way, the overall direction and design of the Project has been formulated collaboratively. Consultation has also helped shape the evolving design, in response to comments raised. This Chapter provides a high-level overview of the main consultation activities undertaken.

Throughout the development of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project various approaches have been adopted, including:

- Partnership working and close engagement to jointly develop proposals and consider issues.
- Consultation to gather comment on specific proposals.
- Wider communication sharing of information.
- The use of social, digital and virtual tools to ensure that a full age range and social demographic has been explored. This approach also supported continued engagement through social restrictions during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The overall approach to communication, consultation and engagement adopted has been based on the following principles:

- Engaging directly with key partners and the wider local community.
- Being honest and open and making every effort to avoid raising unrealistic expectations.
- Being transparent about how we will engage with the broader community.
- Making time to listen and involve people properly.
- Being clear about what can be considered in and out of the scope of the Project.
- Listening and, where appropriate, acting upon feedback to shape the detail and design.
- Being clear about the decisions made and the rationale for them.
- Ensuring that all engagement is clear and ethical and in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Code of Conduct.

These principles were reflected in an initial Stakeholder Engagement Plan prepared at an early stage of the Project. This has been updated at key stages and used to guide all stages

of communications and engagement. The development of the Project has happened over a number of years and a comprehensive engagement log is appended to this report.

3. Consultation for the Lowestoft Tidal Barrier

3.1 Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Strategy

The proposals for the new tidal barrier form part of the wider Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project (LFRMP). The Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project is a major scheme to reduce flood risk to Lowestoft and commenced in 2014. The strategy received initial technical approval through a Strategic Outline Case in 2017, with an Outline Business Case submission in November 2022 gaining further approval **in February 2023**. This recommends a **xx from OBC** million investment in new flood defences for Lowestoft to significantly reduce the risk of tidal flooding. The investment will reduce the risk of flooding to over 1500 residential properties and 800 businesses.

Extensive consultation was undertaken during the development of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project from the initial development of the Strategy between 2014 and 2016 (when the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Strategy was published) to project development to 2023.

For the development of the Strategy over 35 organisations (including statutory bodies and non-governmental organisations), Lowestoft Town Council, parish councils and the general public were consulted at key stages of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Strategy through meetings of the Strategic Steering Group, as part of the Lowestoft Transport Infrastructure Group and the publication of consultation documents issued during the formal consultation in June 2016. In addition, the strategy development was launched at a Lowestoft Rising public event attended by over 100 people. This ensured that the views of all interested parties were identified and could be taken into account during the development of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Strategy which then formed the basis of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project.

3.2 Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project

East Suffolk Council is committed to ensuring that all those who may have an interest in the proposed Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project tidal barrier outside of the statutory consultation process, have adequate opportunity to express their views. A comprehensive stakeholder mapping was undertaken by the project team and the Strategic Steering Group, early on in the project's development to identify and classify stakeholders based on their relationship to the scheme. The stakeholder analysis is regularly reviewed to ensure that it reflects the current state of play. This is included in the communications plan appendix 4. The results of the analysis were used to prepare a programme of consultation and engagement activities. Diversity, inclusion and demographic are assessed and have been applied to all consultation and engagement (Equalities Impact Assessment appendix 5).

A summary of the formal consultation activities undertaken to date is provided in the following sections. A full summary of engagement activities from 2015 is included in appendix 1. This also includes sector specific engagement, for example landowners and fishing groups.

Formal consultation activities since the approval of the Strategic Outline Case:

Public consultation (13th October 2017 to 14th December 2017)

The Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project sought views on four areas of the scheme (at the time including fluvial and pluvial flood risk) to develop a way to reduce flood risk in Lowestoft. Information was shared with the community through a range of means including an Open Day, a Stakeholder workshop, through email to businesses, residents, those previously flooded, key stakeholders, as well as politicians and community groups. Information was also shared through local media publications and social media, and through posters in prominent areas of Lowestoft.

Documents were made available with stakeholders, and those in at risk areas, as well as being available on the LFRMP website, www.lowestoftfrmp.org.uk

Over 50 key stakeholders attended a workshop was held at the Orbis centre on 1st November 2017 to engage with each area of the project.

Feedback from the public consultation and the November workshop provided direction for the further development of the project.

Public open day (30th November 2017)

A public exhibition was held in Lowestoft to support the public consultation. The consultation was widely advertised through the use of traditional media and covered by the East Anglian Daily Times, Lowestoft Journal and local radio. The objective was to provide people with an overview of the project development and to provide a platform to raise their concerns and learn about any constraints.

We were seeking views on:

- Proposals for the look of the tidal walls and tidal barrier to reduce the risk of flooding from the sea.
- Views from the river and harbour users.
- Environmental aspects of the project.

41 people attended including key stakeholders, local businesses and members of the community. Presentations were given on a rolling basis throughout the day as well as information boards, opportunities to ask questions of the project team and information to take away.

Virtual visitor centre launch May 2021 – see comments and figs below

Key stakeholder workshop (21st October)

A workshop was held on 21st October, hosted by the Project Key Stakeholder Group, to provide an overview of the project development to date and to explore the implications of the Navigation Impact Assessment, construction of the tidal barrier, operation of the tidal barrier and the Environmental Impact Assessment. This was an opportunity to provide feedback on plans, ahead of a wider consultation held between 21st November 2022 and 12th January 2023.

36 people attended the workshop. Of these 7 represented Section 5 & 6 schedule consultees. Feedback was collated from the event and fed into project development. It also provided an opportunity to review and further amend consultation material. Responses to questions raised during the workshop was fed back to all those attending and those invited who were unable to attend.

Public consultation (21st November to 12th January 2023)

Following the workshop, a public consultation was held to explore the implications of the Navigation Impact Assessment, construction of the tidal barrier, operation of the tidal barrier and the Environmental Impact Assessment more broadly. The consultation was advertised:

Media (by press release)

Eastern Daily Press
Lowestoft Journal
Local radio
BBC website

Local outlets

Lowestoft library
Lowestoft shop fronts
East Suffolk Council offices

Social media

Facebook
Insta
Twitter

Direct mail

Project stakeholder database: 306 (including Section 5 & 6 schedule consultees)
Book of Reference stakeholder list: 604
Residents directly affected (through electoral roll) 131
Taylor Properties (residents) 161

Two public consultation drop in events were held in Lowestoft on 23rd and 24th November 2022. These were attended by 42 people. Adverse weather conditions raised concerns about in person attendance and identified gaps in engagement with specific groups. Additional engagement took place with businesses (directly affected), fishing groups (commercial and leisure) and inner harbour marine users. These are included in the engagement log (Appendix 1.)

Social, digital and virtual media

The Global pandemic provided significant challenges for consultation. The use of social and digital media provided new opportunities for engagement. In March 2021 the Project extended its social media channels providing increased opportunities for engagement in the project development.

Table 1. Social media

2021	Twitter	Facebook	Insta	LinkedIn	Total
Impressions	61972	55783	3159	14718	135632
Page Views	6717	497	263	917	8394
2022	Twitter	Facebook	Insta	LinkedIn	Total
Impressions	31415	52432	1971	35216	121034
Page Views	4014	618	96	474	5202

Jan 23	Twitter	Facebook	Insta	LinkedIn	Total
Impressions	1520	4600	137	2500	8757
Page Views	81	152	6	184	423

Table 2. Digital media

Website stats	2021	2022	Jan 23	Total
Page visits (unique)	7608	5931	622	14161
Visitors	6803	4585	474	11862

Average dwell time www.lowestoffrmp.org: 27 seconds

In May 2021 a virtual visitor centre was launched to provide regular updates to the community, businesses and organisations, providing information that could be accessed 24/7. The visitor centre is regularly updated and provides an opportunity to leave feedback. A resulting consequence of including virtual engagement tools has been the engagement from the full range of age groups. During the consultation period in 2022/23, the virtual visitor centre was used to supplement in person exhibitions, strengthening the reach of engagement during this critical period.

Link to virtual engagement room [Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Tidal Barrier Engagement - East Suffolk Council \(virtualconsultation.co.uk\)](https://www.lowestoffrmp.org)

To date, the engagement rate is as follows:

- 1077 sessions
- 382 page views
- Bounce rate 42.96%

Fig 1. New and returning users

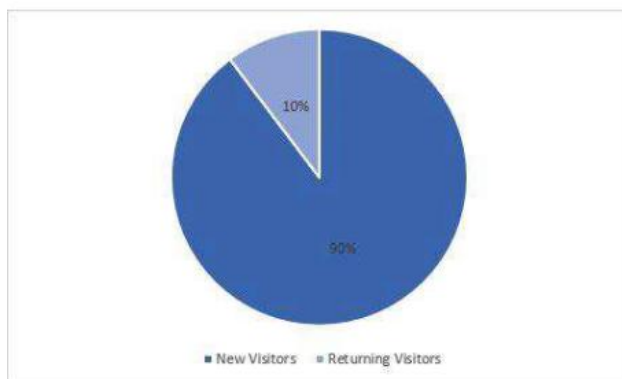
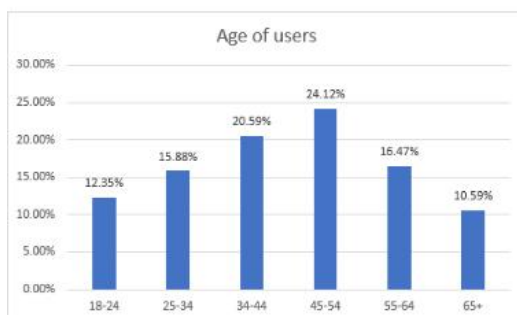


Fig 2. Demographic of visitors



Engagement with schools and colleges

We recognise the importance of engaging students in the understanding of climate change and flood risk, particularly relating to where they live. In 2017, in partnership with Flipside UK and as part of the Watertight Words literacy initiative, an exercise took place involving over 1,000 students of schools and colleges in Lowestoft. Students were encouraged, through a series of workshops, to express the words and phrases that they associated with the sea. The results of these workshops were translated into display boards that were placed initially on the Town Hall and then moved to other locations in Lowestoft.

A series of those words and phrases will be etched inside the glass tidal flood walls which are adjacent to the tidal barrier and will be accompanied by interpretation boards.

We have initiated a number of events at schools and colleges including:

- Careers fairs
- Talks with colleges about career opportunities/apprenticeships on the project (resulting in 6 apprenticeships to date)
- School visits
- Virtual and in person work experience (30 weeks in total)
- Virtual student career's fair (from 2021 to date) [Norfolk and Suffolk Coast Forum Careers Fair 2022 - in partnership with the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project \(exhibition.app\)](#)
- Student specific Norfolk and Suffolk Coast Conference workshops and learning opportunities (2018, 2019, 2021 (virtual) and 2022 (virtual) conference).

In October 2022 a competition was launched to schools in Lowestoft to encourage entries to support the naming of the proposed tidal barrier. This closes at the end of the academic year 2023. Further activities leading up to this period, designed to encourage participation, are planned.

4. Regulatory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Consultation

Jacobs to provide

5. Consultation with organisations named in Schedule 5 and 6

Certain organisations specified in Schedules 5 and 6 the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 ("the Rules") are required to be given

copies of particular application documents or notification of the application at the time that the application is made. It is also a requirement of those Rules that this report confirms whether those bodies have been consulted by East Suffolk Council and,

if not, the explanation for this.

As described in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 of this report, there has been detailed and wide-ranging consultation by East Suffolk Council on the development and implementation of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project generally and then more specifically in relation to the proposals for the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Tidal Barrier. Most of the Schedule 5 and 6 parties have had the opportunity to participate in this and, as described above, East Suffolk Council has engaged with those most directly affected on an individual basis.

Appendices 5 and 6 to this report list the Schedule 5 and 6 bodies on whom documents and/or notice of the TWA Order application will be given and summarises how each has been consulted up to 11th May 2023. Each of the Schedule 5 and 6 parties was sent notification of the TWAO application and a draft Order on xxxxxxxx. In addition to the Schedule 5 and 6 parties, notification was also sent, on xxxxxx to the following interested parties:

6. Future consultation

Should the Secretary of State determine to authorise the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project, consultation, engagement and information sharing will continue throughout the detailed design, construction and operational stages. Future planned consultation activities include:

- Individual meetings with landowners, and their representatives, who are directly affected by the proposals.
- Affected landowners will be consulted further about the proposals through future design development and construction stages.
- Ongoing meeting with other affected groups, in particular with marine users and the fishing community
- The local community and general public will also continue to be kept informed of scheme progress.
- Ongoing Strategic Steering Group and Key Stakeholder Group meetings through the detailed design stage to support and inform further development and to help identify opportunities and enhancements that the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project could help to deliver.
- A Community Liaison Group will be set up to provide a mechanism for ongoing dialogue with affected residents and businesses.

East Suffolk Council



**Would you like to find out more about the Lowestoft
Flood Risk Management Project?**

email

lowestoftfrmp@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

or visit our website

www.lowestoftfrmp.org.uk



Lowestoft Tidal Barrier Order

May 2023